

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the City's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS). The goals and policies regarding parks is found in Chapter 2 of this plan and the PROS plan. They are included in both places to meet grant eligibility requirements.

Developing a comprehensive plan necessarily involves asking residents about vision and values, and as the process to update Monroe's plan progressed, participants repeatedly noted the City's parks. Residents were especially interested in preserving open-spaces that link Monroe to its natural setting.

The City updated its PROS plan as part of this comprehensive plan update. That plan is included as Appendix F of this document, and includes additional data and analysis of parks conditions.

The following pages contain an overview of Monroe's existing parks and recreation conditions and needs; adopted levels of service (LOS); and priorities relevant to parks, recreation and open space. Because parks and open-space systems are often closely related to factors including land use, transportation and basic infrastructure, the full goal, policy and actions framework, presented in Chapter 2, should be considered this plan's most complete expression of PROS-related policy.



Figure 7.01 - Parks, open space and recreational assets are so key to life in Monroe that residents wished to include broad-ranging goals and policies in this plan. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Purpose & Relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA)

Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities to consider as part of the development of their comprehensive plan the goal to:

"Retain open space, enhance recreation opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities."

The GMA also requires a Parks and Recreation element be included in comprehensive plans. Specifically, the GMA requires the element to include:



Figure 7.02 - Parks add considerably to the quality of life and value of nearby neighborhoods. Here, a critical link from Lewis Street Park into Al Borlin Park. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

- *Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period*
- *Evaluation of facilities and service needs*
- *Evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreation demand.*

This element incorporates portions of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and provides a larger policy basis for that plan. Because the two plans were developed simultaneously, the policy and capital improvements recommended by the parks plan are interconnected as applicable to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Conditions Overview

Within the City of Monroe there are 14 functional parks, totaling 207.1 gross acres. The estimated net usable space within the existing parks is 62.6 acres. The parks are of various sizes, states

of improvement and are owned, administered and maintained by the City of Monroe. Additionally, the Department is responsible for the maintenance of the streetscapes along Main Street, Lewis Street, Fryelands Boulevard, N. Kelsey, Hillcrest and three roundabouts, while these areas do not function as parkland, they are a part of the park land inventory that is maintained by the City.

The City-operated parks have facilities which provide a range of recreation activities, including softball, soccer, basketball, lacrosse, skate boarding, tennis, children's and preschool play equipment, picnic shelters, water sports, open play areas, trails, pathways, restrooms and other passive recreational opportunities.

Additionally, Monroe is situated next to the Skykomish River, a popular recreation resource. Snohomish County also owns and operates three parks within the general vicinity of the City of Monroe.

Several trails and street-side pathways in Monroe contribute to the community's recreational activities, and Snohomish County has an extensive, accessible trails system that extends to King County and connects to Washington State trails. While at present none of Snohomish County trails connect to Monroe, plans exist to create these connections.

Table 7.01 identifies existing properties classified as parks which are owned and operated by the City of Monroe. The map (Figure 7.03) shows Monroe's existing park and trail system.

In addition to its park and trail system, the Monroe School District owns and operates 13 sites in the City of Monroe and the Monroe School District Area. District-owned sites which may be available for recreation use by the general public, as administered by the City of Monroe Parks & Recreation Department, are estimated to be 81.5 acres. Actual use and the assigned acreage value of School District properties and facilities is dependent on the establishment of specific interlocal agreements and the terms and operating conditions of such agreements. As of early 2015, interlocal agreements exist for shared space at Lake Tye and one is being developed for joint use of, to be developed, synthetic fields at the High School. School lands are not considered a part of the Monroe parkland inventory nor do

Table 7.01 - Monroe's existing parks inventory

Park Type and Name	Gross Acres	Net Developed Acres	Undeveloped Park Land
Tot Lots			
Ramblewood Tot Lot	0.1	0.1	0
Neighborhood Parks			
Blueberry Children's Park	1.1	1.1	0
Park Meadows	3	3	0
Cedar Grove Park	0.4	0.4	0
Currie View Park	4.3	2.3	2
Hillcrest Park	1.5	1.5	0
Rainier View Park	1.7	1.7	0
Stanton Meadows Park	3.5	3.5	0
Wales Street Park	0.5	0.5	0
Community Parks			
Lake Tye Park*	64.5	14.4	50.1
Skykomish River Park	32	30.4	1.6
Special Use Parks			
Lewis Street Park	3.5	1.7	1.8
Travelers Park*	1	1	0
Nature Preserves			
Al Borlin Park	90	1	89
Total	207.1	57.6	144.5

* Undeveloped acreage at Lake Tye includes portions of parkland covered by water, and is removed from available land in the needs analysis

they contribute to an adopted recreation level of service, but they are available to some degree for local recreational use.

Needs Assessment

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan and Comprehensive Plan update employed extensive public engagement, establishing Monroe's park and recreation needs based on the findings of a community survey, discussions with stakeholders and results of public outreach. The key findings of the City's park and recreation needs are:

- Participants believe that parks maintenance is paramount, and that facilities be available for youth and adult sports and easily reached by foot or bicycle
- Participants want to see more trails, river / water access and baseball / softball fields; there is also demand for picnic facilities
- Though the City does not provide many direct recreation programs, there is demand for outdoor recreation programs, athletic/sports programs and youth and teen programs

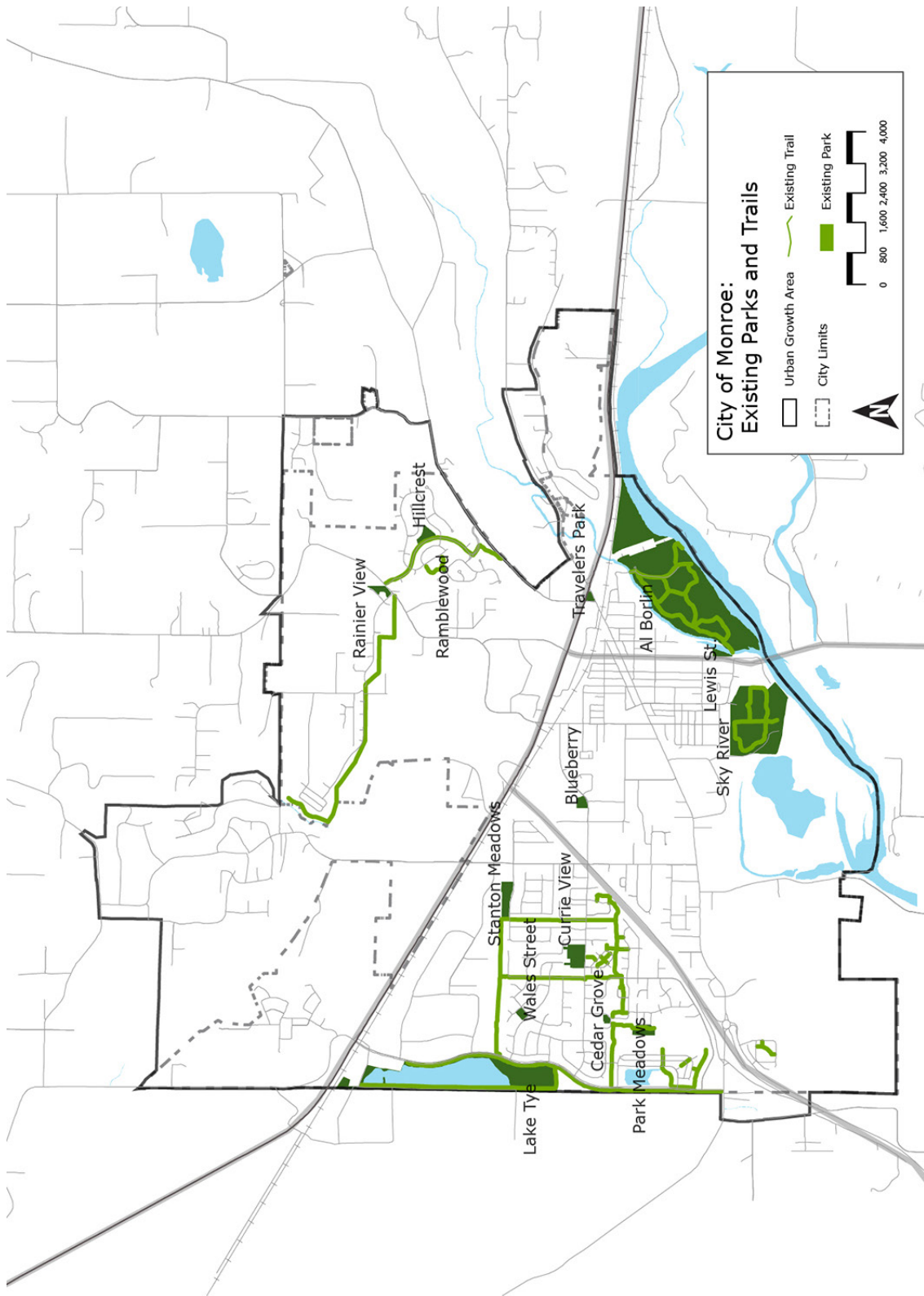


Figure 7.03 - Monroe's proximity to the Skykomish River presents significant opportunities to take advantage of scenic vistas and open space.

- *Participants think their parks are attractive and well-maintained and, while the hours of operation are convenient, they would use school property if available after school hours*
- *Currie View Park is relatively popular compared to other neighborhood parks, which may be due to its use as a practice field for lacrosse*
- *Participants want to see all-weather synthetic fields at both Lake Tye and the High School. There is high demand for Centennial Trail improvements. Participants rank the Cadman Pit RV Park and non-motorized boat launch as a relatively low priority*
- *Participants favor a publicly-voted bond and lodging tax as likely funding sources, but they are less supportive of reducing services or not building new projects as a way to balance budgets*
- *44 percent of participants are willing to pay at least \$100 annually to fund park improvements or parkland acquisition*
- *League sports and trails and pathways - especially new trails that link to state and County networks - are the participants' highest priority.*

A complete discussion of the public process, workshop results, and community survey can be found in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (Appendix F).

Levels of Service

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) recommends, but does not require, a determination of a level of service for parks and recreation planning, including trails. The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan adopts a park LOS because using a LOS tool can indicate strengths and weaknesses of the park, recreation, and trail system and further suggest where additional resources or improvements are needed.

An LOS of 4.75 developed acres per 1,000 residents for parks, and one mile per 1,000 residents for trails is incorporated in the plan. Further, while not part of the adopted

LOS, improvements and acquisitions should additionally consider the following distribution and access criteria:

- *Neighborhood Parks – Service area of one-mile radius*
- *Community Parks – Service area of five-mile radius*
- *Special Use Area – No service area recommended, as people will generally travel as far as needed to use such facilities*
- *Regional Park – Within 30 minutes by personal vehicle. Monroe does not have regional park facilities, and these facilities are not typically provided by cities of Monroe's size*
- *Natural Open Space – No service area recommended.*

Forecast Conditions

By the year 2035, the City of Monroe is projected to have 25,119 people living with the City and its Urban Growth Area (UGA), accounting for the incarcerated population 22,719 will be served by the park system. Using the adopted LOS, Monroe will need a total of 107.92 acres of developed parkland and approximately 22.17 miles of trails by then.

The analysis shows that the City of Monroe has a deficit of park land, approximately 14 acres. This means that in order to satisfy the total 2035 demand, the City will need to develop all available park land it owns that is available for development (35.4 acres) and acquire and develop an additional 14.92 acres for a total new developed parkland of 50.32 acres.

The analysis also shows that Monroe will have a surplus of trail capacity in 2035 of approximately 18 miles - capacity includes designated but undeveloped trails. However, a total of about 9 miles of trails should be developed/ designated to meet level of service standards.

To meet its parkland needs, the City should consider acquisition or joint school development opportunities (similar to Lake Tye).



Figure 7.04 - Special-purpose fields like the “Miracle League” Field and all-weather surface fields enjoy strong support among residents. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

In addition to potential acquisition, to meet additional parkland requirements over time, Monroe should focus on design and development of the lands it presently owns. There should be improvements made in response to specific needs that will enhance facilities, use and service capacity of existing parks.

The specific recommendations for improvements to existing parks and the development of new parks are described in Sections 4 and 5 of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Parks Development Priorities

The primary park development objective is to provide Monroe’s residents with sufficient developed park land, well maintained facilities and open space to meet recreation demand. Table 7.02 provides a summary of park and trail

Table 7.02 - Park area, by classification

Park Classification	Amount	Ave. Size (ac)	Total Acres
Neighborhood / School Park	1	8	8
Special Use**	2	32	37
Trails and Pathways*	13	-	13
Total Parks			45
Total Trails*			13

* Trails and pathways expressed in miles

** Special Use sites vary in size based on location and program

development objectives to meet the population projection for 2035.

Monroe seeks to deliver recreation opportunities and attain an acceptable LOS through three categories of physical improvements: existing park renovations, new park development, and trail development. Figure 7.03 spatially identifies these proposed objectives.

To be able to direct funding toward the most significant projects in terms of meeting community needs, all projects recommended in the plan were prioritized. The recommended actions are:

- Various renovations to existing park facilities
- Master planning and acquisition of the Special Use Cadman Park, including coordinating a portion of the Centennial Trail extension to Sky River
- Master planning processes for Lake Tye and Sky River parks
- Centennial Trail markings / signs from Stanton Meadows along 179th to Park Place middle school
- Coordination with the Monroe School District on the development of all-weather fields at the high school and Centennial Trail Extension at Park Place Middle School

Policy Overview

The administration, governance, and empowerment of Monroe’s parks and recreation

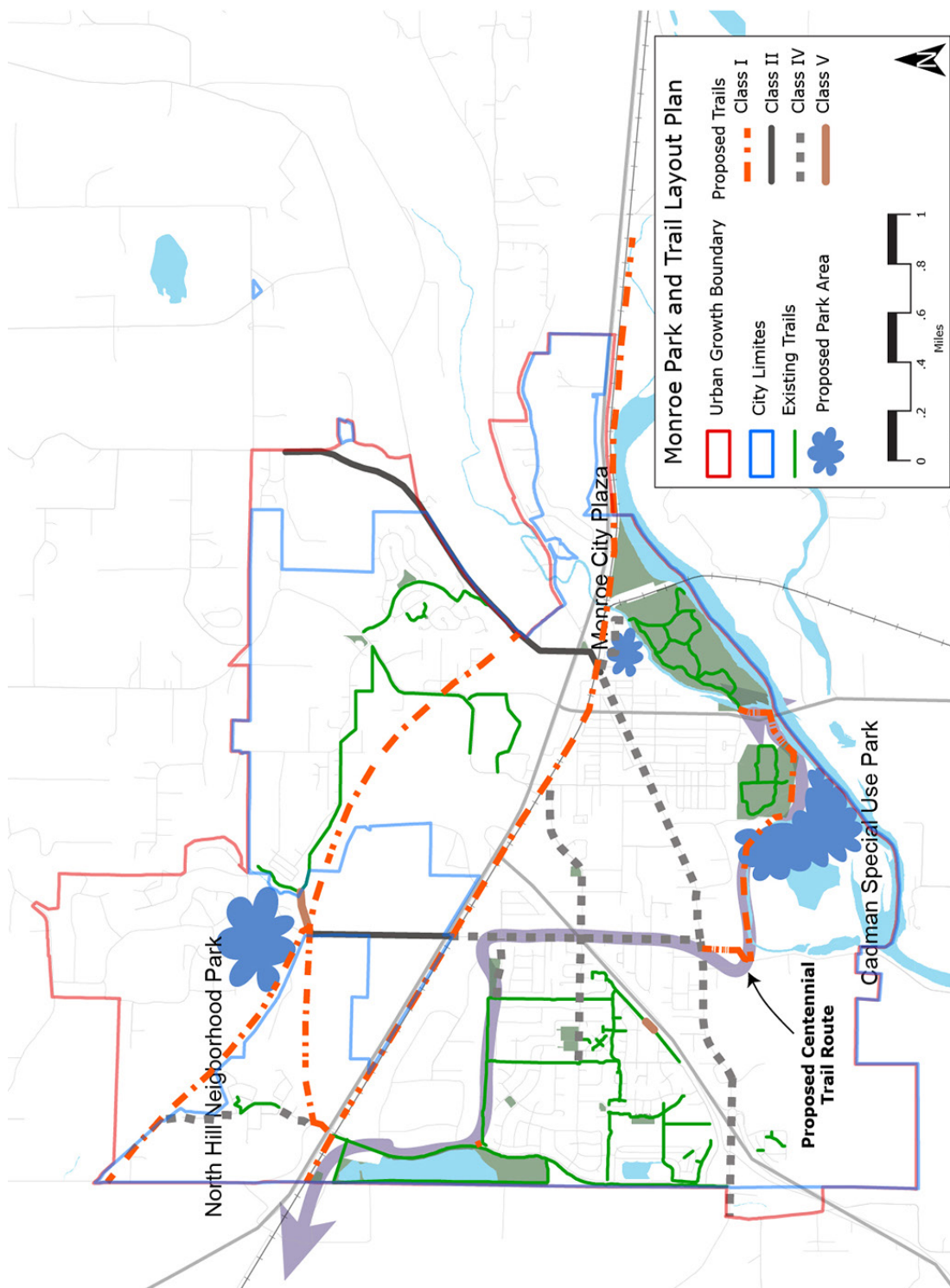


Figure 7.05 - Monroe's park and trail layout plan represents the physical layout of proposed improvements to meet projected demand to 2035. (Image source: City of Monroe)

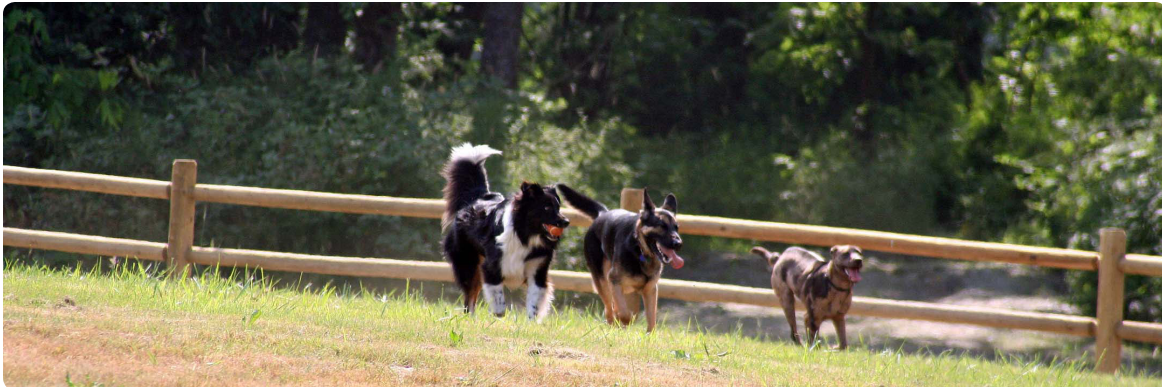


Figure 7.06 - Dog parks like "Wiggly Field" are likely to remain popular, as homes with smaller yards become more common across Monroe. (Image source: City of Monroe)

department are based on a set of policies that serves the public's interest and promotes and protects public parks, trails, recreation and functional open space assets.

This plan asserts that land used for recreational purposes has a positive influence on the local economy and quality of life. Parks and recreation assets are of public interest and deliver proven benefits in terms of social, economic, and environmental qualities.

The parks, recreational, and open space policies contained in Chapter 2 help extend and coordinate these topics among a wide range of other, often complementary, planning topics, such as land-use, transportation, economic development and environmental considerations.

The parks, recreation, and open space policies and actions cover familiar and critical themes including:

- *Coordinating transportation and trail network plans to promote alternative modes and routes of travel*
- *Using parks and open space resources as an economic development tool*
- *Prioritizing the preservation and maintenance of existing facilities over the construction of new ones*
- *Coordinating with the school district to take advantage mutually beneficial recreation opportunities.*

The policies contained in Chapter 2 have been organized to follow the goal or goals they most

closely relate to. Similarly, each policy includes column indicators that show which plan element or elements it supports, helping the reader gain a topical understanding of the policy set. A set of action items is also included in Chapter 2, with a more detailed listing of these in Chapter 10, Implementation.

